

Death toll in Adamawa herdsmen attacks hits 30

August 3, 2016



L: People killed in attacks by herdsmen on Kodomun, Adamawa State... on Tuesday. R: Children fleeing. Photos: Hindi Livinus

Hindi Livinus, Yola

The Adamawa State Police Commissioner, Mohammed Ghazzali has been criticised over his comment and handling of the Fulani herdsmen attacks on Kodomun, following the discovery of eight more corpses.

Youths from Kodomun who brought out the corpses of the slain members of the community from the bush said, the recovery of the additional bodies had raised the death toll from the attacks which started on Friday to 30.

The incident, came on the day the Adamawa State Governor, Mohammed Jibrilla, visited the paramount ruler of the area, the Hama Bata, HRH Alhamdu Teneke, and held a security meeting with him at his palace with other service chiefs in the state in attendance.

Ghazzali, who visited the area on Monday shortly after the attacks by herdsmen, had reportedly claimed no life was lost.

Ghazzali's denial of any casualty resulting from the attacks, while addressing journalists, after the security meeting, elicited anger from those present at the palace.

Ghazzali explained that his refusal to deploy policemen to Kodomun, which had come under attacks, from Fulani herdsmen, earlier on Friday and Saturday, before that of Monday was done so as not to make him look like "taking sides"

He said, "My men were on the ground. We would not risk our men to be there just to give security to one side so that the other side will not think we have taken side with one side.

"There are two different people involved in these clashes: the herdsmen and the farmers. And we have to be very careful in handling such type of communal clashes."

It was, however, the police commissioner's insistence that no life was lost in the Monday attacks which sparked the uproar.

The angry youths who threatened to unleash mayhem in the aftermath of his comment were dissuaded from their action by the elders in the palace.

The monarch, who said his people had been killed in the attacks, challenged the security chiefs to visit Kodomun, to find out for themselves if indeed there were "no deaths".

He said, "A lot of people have been killed. Today they would go and see for themselves the corpses of those slain in the attacks some of which they would find in the town and those yet to be brought in lying in the bush."

But Martins Babale, who represented the state governor, distanced the state government from the utterance of the police commissioner, saying "This is his own opinion. His professional opinion."

Babale said he would visit the razed community after the military might have combed the area and recovered the corpses of those killed in the attacks.

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